

while I was waiting my turn in the barber's or the dentist's chair. When I have thus been stealing a few minutes to read, I often envied the people who had more time to spare. But when I have observed how many people have oceans of time, but carry no books in their pockets and spend no time reading, I have wondered whether we do not value even our highest opportunities better if we do not have too many of them. Thus I say to myself when,

leaving my automobile at home because I cannot read while I drive it, I take my seat in an unobserved corner of the street-car, and pull from my pocket a copy, or even a fragment, of one of my books.

We should all be grateful for a certain perversity in human nature. In my own case, what doubles the pleasure of reading is the subconscious feeling that I ought, most of the time, to be doing something else.

Atlantic Monthly Feb 22

✓ HOW LINCOLN CAME TO SCHOOL NO. 300

BY WILLIAM O. STODDARD, JR.

It was a solemn occasion.

The benches were hard, and one should sit still and keep the eyes on the blackboard. It was that one had been bad and hence detained after hours.

The virtuous had departed noisily long since, and only the unregenerate remained by way of punishment, in order that they should experience a change of heart and sin no more the sin of violence after the manner of the Irishman and the Italian.

Aaron was experiencing no repentance. It was wickedness, no doubt, in the eyes of 'Teacher,' to have pushed Rebecca of the ringlets off her bench on to the floor; but how could he explain that it was done in sheer admiration? He realized the futility of any such explanation and did not make it.

There was, however, one soft luminous spot in the otherwise loathly school-room — Rebecca had been asked to remain also, for she had rebuked Aaron with a good sound slap in his face. To

Aaron, that should have ended the matter to the satisfaction of all concerned; but Miss Clark, ruler of their universe, thought differently.

A blackboard is not in itself a thing of beauty or of interest. To keep one's eyes upon it as long leaden minutes crawl slowly into fives, tens, and fifteens, and then, repeating, drag into other fives and tens, endlessly, is beyond all discipline.

Starting at the lower right-hand corner and traveling the entire frame, noting all inequalities in the oaken border, Aaron's eyes soon finished with the blackboard and sought other torpid entertainment. At length they rested on the portrait of a man which hung over the door — the door through which Miss Clark might at any moment enter. There they met the serene eyes of the Martyred President.

Aaron gazed long and thoughtfully. At length he shifted a quick glance toward Rebecca, and noted that she also

had sought the kindly portrait as a relief from the black Sahara in front of them. The silence had become unbearable.

'He looks on me the most,' said Aaron.

'He should look on you, I don't think, when you stays on the school fer shovin',' retorted Rebecca.

'He sure does look on me the most,' repeated Aaron, in tones persistent, not belligerent — as one merely stating a self-evident fact.

'He looks on you sorrowful fer shovin'.' Rebecca exercised her right to change her mind to seize an advantage.

'He looks sorrowful, but it ain't fer shovin' or fer slappin',' continued Aaron thoughtfully.

'He should listen from you, he would laugh the whiles.' Rebecca had not forgotten the push.

'He could n't to laugh on me; he is friends.'

'He looks he has got a awful mad on,' continued Rebecca, determined to oppose.

'It ain't a mad he's got, it's a sorrowful for us we stays on the school.'

'He looks somebody should get hit off somebody a smack in the face. Ain't it fierce how black he makes. Und he was boss from America. Sooner he was my teacher, I should make myself a sickness and get excuses by my fadder.'

'I guess you dunno what it is, a president. You should better ask Teacher to learn you our history.'

'You could n't to learn me nothing from President Lincoln, what he makes the Civil War from niggers und from rebels.'

'Nobody could n't to learn you nothing. You needs you should know something. Niggers was working like my fadder tells how *he* was working by Russia — fer nothin'. Stands Lincoln und says, "You're free," und gives 'em jobs und union wages.'

'Sure, you could n't to learn me nothing, und then they fights, my world, how they fight! und Lincoln gets killed off 'em the whiles he becomes our ancestor, Teacher says.'

'Und he ain't got no mad, und he did n't want to kill nobody, und he was friends from men what has to work fer nothin'.'

'But he is Krisht!' Rebecca could not concede everything — even to Lincoln.

'Sure! Und what fer a man is that! what gets killed the whiles he should get jobs fer niggers. He iss friends from America, und from Russia und —'

The door under the portrait opened, and entered Miss Clark.

'I hope you have been quiet while I have been gone.'

'Yiss ma'am!'

'Teacher, yiss ma'am!'